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"There," said my friend, with a triumphant air, pointing to the introduction of the chapter on Mount Washington in Starr King's "White Hills," "—there is what Emerson says about Mount Washington."

I had read Emerson's poems with considerable care, and in a former conversation had expressed my conviction that he had written nothing relating to the most famous of the White Mountains. But it looked as if I were at fault, for on the page held open before me I read:

"Every morn I lift my head,
Gaze o'er New England underspread,
South from Saint Lawrence to the Sound,
From Catskill east to the seabound";

and so on for a page, with Emerson's name at the bottom. Silenced, but not fully convinced, I took an early opportunity to consult Emerson in the original, and found that what Mr. King represented as having been written in reference to Mount Washington belongs to Emerson's noble poem, "Monadnock." The second line, however, should read

"See New England underspread,"

and "Catskill" is spelled with a "K." But would not any reader of "The White Hills" be justified—as my friend was—in the belief that the lines were written as if uttered by Mount Washington and not by Monadnock? Is there either right or reason in an author's playing fast and loose with his readers in such a fashion? An offence like this is less easily condoned than Starr King's mistake, in this same book, of making the Connecticut River empty into the Sound at New Haven.

Considerable experience in handling manuscripts and inquiry among others engaged in such work have sufficed to form a very firm conviction that carelessness in quoting is one of the besetting sins of literary workers. The authors who can trust their memories implicitly in this respect are very few indeed, if there are any such. The only safe rule is to verify every quotation by a personal examination of the original. This takes some time, but it makes accuracy certain; and if the practice should become universal, it would materially lighten the labors of overworked and often patience-tried editors. May the time speedily come when along with the legend "All Rights Reserved" at the portals of our books there shall be inscribed, "All Quotations Verified by the Author"!

ARCHIE EMERSON PALMER.

IV.

IS SUICIDE A SIN?

SIN is the transgression of a divine law; but there is no divine law against suicide: therefore suicide is not a sin.

The Mosaic records and the New Testament exhibit eight instances of suicide, viz., Abimelech, Judges, ix., 50-55; Samson, Judges, xvi., 23-31; Saul and his armor-bearer, I. Samuel, xxxi., 3-6; Ahithophel, II. Samuel, xvii., 23; Zimri, I. Kings, xvi., 18; Razis, II. Maccabees, xiv., 37; Judas Iscariot, Matthew, xxvii., 3.

Strabo, who lived in the first half-century before our Lord, tells us that in the island of Ioulis, one of the Cyclades, persons sixty years of age were permitted to commit suicide, as they could no longer enjoy life, and were unfit to serve the republic. They terminated life at a festival. They girded their brows with a floral chaplet, and, taking a cup of the juice of hemlock or of poppies, sank insensibly into fatal sleep.

Aristotle tells us that an Athenian suicide was adjudged culpable for having deprived the republic of a citizen, and, as a stigma, his hand was separately buried.

Socrates said that it was not lawful for any one to deprive himself of life, because we were placed on earth as soldiers at a post, and we ought not to quit our station without permission of the gods. Suicide was rare in Greece, for public opinion reproached the perpetrator with moral cowardice. But Plutarch praises Demosthenes for his success in concealing the poison by which he rescued himself from the cruelty of Antipater. The annals of Rome are bloody with self-slaughter. It was esteemed an evidence of manly fortitude, sanctioned by the maxims of the

Stoics, and encouraged by public opinion. Under the imperial dynasty every new reign was inaugurated with the blood of many citizens. An official intimation that a man had incurred the displeasure of the Emperor was tantamount to a sentence of death. If the citizen anticipated his execution by a voluntary death, his innocence was presumed, his body was honorably buried, and his family were allowed to inherit his estate.

The right, duty, and privilege of self-immolation were so universally conceded that no poet or writer questioned them. Virgil, however, seems to entertain some scruple, for, in describing *Aeneas's* visit to Hades, he says that the shades of suicides were sad and expressed a willingness to endure poverty and adversity patiently if they could be allowed to return to earth. But the custom was permanently established, and after the capricious massacres of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, suicide became fashionable even among the Roman women; and this feminine eccentricity was corrected only by a proclamation that the bodies of all female suicides should thereafter be exposed, naked, in the Forum.

Cicero and Brutus condemned suicide, and the latter wrote a treatise reproaching Cato as guilty of impiety and cowardice, but afterwards withdrew his censure and avowed a change of opinion, and finally imitated Cato by falling on his sword at Philippi.

However variable the opinions of individuals might be, the ancient laws recognized the right of suicide. At Marseilles, France, in ancient times, the Senate kept poison which was supplied to persons who gave sufficient reasons for desiring to kill themselves. This was done with the view of preventing hasty suicides, and to give the would-be self-destroyer time for due reflection. In India widows ostensibly desired to be burned alive on their husbands' funeral-piles; but, thanks to Great Britain, that, with other heathen abominations, has ceased. No general proclivity to suicide has been manifested by Egyptians, Persians, Assyrians, or other ancient nations, but isolated instances have occurred.

Gibbon alludes to the suicide of the wife of Gerontius, in the fifth century, and expresses surprise at the praises bestowed on this act of despair by Sozomon, an ecclesiastic historian, who observes that "the wife of Gerontius was a Christian," and that "her death was worthy of her religion and of immortal fame." Gibbon mentions, also, that a Chinese emperor, driven from his throne by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, "ascended a funeral-pile, and gave orders that, after he had stabbed himself, the fire should be kindled by his attendants," and thus consummated his abdication. A correspondent describes a most remarkable suicide in Shanghai not very long ago. It was that of a young widow, who resolved to end her miserable existence after the death of her husband, a widow not being permitted to remarry in China. A gay procession was formed, and proceeded to a scaffold furnished with seats affording the best view of the sacrifice. The woman chatted with her friends, partook of a collation, caressed a little child, presented it with a necklace, scattered flowers among the spectators, and then cheerfully placed her head in the noose and swung herself into eternity.

Japan, although an ancient nation, has become so modernized that the *hari-kari* has fallen into "innocuous desuetude."

Now, what is the reason that, notwithstanding the absence of threats, reproof, or admonition from the records on which the Christian religion is founded and sustained, there should have been, and still is, so general a conviction that suicide is an unpardonable sin? There is not, from Genesis to Revelation, a single commandment against suicide. In the eight cases adduced from the Jewish records, the facts are simply set forth without comment. The prevalent belief is based on false deductions and interpretations of Holy Writ. These deductions and interpretations were addressed, centuries ago, to an ignorant and credulous laity, who received them with humility and awe. The people at that time knew no better. Kings authenticated their charters with a "his mark," and nobles used as their seal the haft of the dagger. The Italian hierarchy monopolized all knowledge. Their authority was recognized as divine. All human beings in Christendom were subject, from the cradle to the grave, to ecclesiastic discipline.

It is the nature of power to take and to keep all it can grasp; and by baptism, parochial catechism, auricular confession, penance, extreme unction, consecrated burial, masses, etc., etc., every man, woman, and child was exposed to an espionage incessant, minute, and inquisitorial. The Bible was not a book obtainable by the laity, who, indeed, were too ignorant to read it, even if the attempt were permissible. They were told by the priests what was in it, and they took it for granted that to verify the priests' instructions might imperil their salvation. This condition of things continued for several centuries.

The first official proclamation in regard to suicide was issued by the Council of Braga in the year 563. This forbade any burial service for those *qui violentan sili ipsis infermet mortem*; to which was added, about 750, the limitation "if they do it by the instigation of the devil." It was further decreed "concerning those who, by any fault, inflict death on themselves, let there be no commemoration of them in the oblation; nor for them who are punished for their crimes; nor shall their corpses be carried unto the grave with palms." (Wilkins.)

These extracts from canon law enable us to understand the obsequies of *Ophelia*, as set forth in "Hamlet." *Laertes*, her brother, demands the full funeral ceremony. The priest replies:

"Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trump; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her."

Shakespeare was apparently "a heretic," but he still entertained the tradition against suicide, for *Hamlet* says:

"O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!"

And *Imogene* says:

"Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine
That cravens my weak hand."

And *Iago* says to *Roderigo*: "If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it in a more delicate way than drowning."

Between the Council of Braga in 563 and the age of Shakespeare a thousand years had elapsed, and the persuasion of the implacable wrath of God had become universal.

The Word of God is freely circulated now, and is no longer read with fear and trembling. The body of a suicide is no longer buried in England at a road-crossing with a stake driven through it. But the Italian hierarchy still refuses the corpse "Christian" burial in "consecrated" ground. Yet it is doubtful whether such exclusion of the natural body has any deleterious effect on the good standing of the spiritual body at its resurrection, when the question is not, "How did he die?" but "How has he lived?" The good old Friend, William Penn, as early as 1700, prescribed in his charter to Pennsylvania "that if any person, through temptation or melancholy, shall destroy himself, his estate, real and personal, shall, notwithstanding, descend to his wife, children, or relations, as if he had died a natural death."

In modern times France and England have been most noted for thus shuffling off this mortal coil, but of late years our own people have been emulating them, and our daily papers seldom appear with this department of their record blank.

This sad epidemic is to be deplored because it deprives the State of citizens. But how can it be prevented? New York has passed a law for punishing such attempts, but how few verdicts have been rendered! The law, however, serves as an admonition to do the thing thoroughly.

Reform must be brought about by moral suasion, not by terror.

Finally, suicide, though not a sin, is a weakness and a folly. It is more manly to endure the burdens and responsibilities of life than to desert our station, in panic fright at, perhaps, the very crisis of victory. A man may be vexed with cares, fretted by adversities, and despondent in grief; but who is free from such trials? He must bravely sustain them, and he will find his strength confirmed by the discipline. Have faith in a God loving, omnipotent, and wise. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

SAMUEL YORKE AT LEE.

V.

LANDLORDISM IN FRANCE.

THE world has always been more or less puzzled over the recuperative power displayed by France, and the economists have been pleased to explain it by the existence of an extensive peasant proprietorship, which, they have said, has prevented the monopolization of the soil. In year 1889, when the eyes of the world were fixed upon Paris and her wonderful exposition, the same old question intruded itself upon all thoughtful persons, and the same answer was generally given.

It seemed as if no other solution could explain the relative prosperity of this country, which supports the second largest army and navy of Europe, and carries a grinding tax system with unbowed back. Persons who have not been satisfied with this explanation expected that some of the international congresses held at the French capital during last summer would throw a new light upon the subject. They were not deceived, for there was much discussion of the theme in the congresses on the land and the labor questions. Various estimates were presented, more or less authentic, and out of them all has come a clearer understanding of the relation of the great French republic to national progress. Instead, however, of being a nation of small land-owners, she is proved to be quite the contrary. Figures leave no doubt as to the existence of an oppressive landlordism in France, and make a comparison with the condition of things just after the Revolution a painful study.

One of the greatest reforms of the Revolution was the levying of a good round tax on the lands of the nobility, which comprised a very large portion of the cultivable surface of the nation. The nobles would not use them and would not let any one else use them. A feeling that whatever the nobility possessed should be made to benefit the public was probably with the Revolutionists a stronger reason for taxing these lands than a clear idea of what part land plays in production.

At any rate, the exemption was taken away and the nobles' lands were heavily taxed, and to-day that exemption has practically been restored, immensely to the profit, not of a nobility, but of a later aristocracy that possesses estates which, placed beside those of the ante-Revolution days, would by no means make the present owners blush.

The law of 1790 had fixed the land tax at 300,000,000 francs. If this tax had remained in operation upon the same basis,—that is to say, upon the revenue from the ground,—it would produce to-day more than 1,500,000,000 francs, since the revenue has increased more than five-fold. But the triumphant reaction from the Revolution saw no good in this system. It was opposed to the work of the great physiocrats, Turgot, Quesnay, and others, and haste was made to undo it by throwing the burden of taxation upon labor by means of indirect *impôts* which should be more favorable to the monopolizers of the land. How steadily this was done may be judged from the following table of reductions accorded to landed property by the reactionary governments since 1789 :

Land tax in 1790.....	300,000,000 francs.
Reductions in francs.....	
1797.....	22,000,000.
1798.....	11,000,000.
1799.....	17,000,000.
1801.....	5,000,000.
1802.....	1,500,000.
1804.....	8,500,000.
1805.....	3,000,000.
1819.....	4,000,000.
1821.....	13,500,000.